

MICHIGAN VEHICLE CODE (EXCERPT)
Act 300 of 1949

257.722 Maximum axle load; normal loading maximum; designating highways as adequate for heavier loading; restrictions as to tandem axle assemblies; exceptions; public utility vehicles; normal size of tires; maximum wheel load; reduction of maximum axle load on concrete pavements during March, April, and May; exemptions; suspension of restrictions; determination of gross vehicle weight and axle weights; designation of highways for operation of certain vehicles; definitions.

Sec. 722. (1) The maximum axle load shall not exceed the number of pounds designated in the following provisions that prescribe the distance between axles:

(a) If the axle spacing is 9 feet or more between axles, the maximum axle load shall not exceed 18,000 pounds for vehicles equipped with high pressure pneumatic or balloon tires.

(b) If the axle spacing is less than 9 feet between 2 axles but more than 3-1/2 feet, the maximum axle load shall not exceed 13,000 pounds for high pressure pneumatic or balloon tires.

(c) If the axles are spaced less than 3-1/2 feet apart, the maximum axle load shall not exceed 9,000 pounds per axle.

(d) Subdivisions (a), (b), and (c) shall be known as the normal loading maximum.

(2) When normal loading is in effect, the state transportation department, or a local authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction, may designate certain highways, or sections of those highways, where bridges and road surfaces are adequate for heavier loading, and revise a designation as needed, on which the maximum tandem axle assembly loading shall not exceed 16,000 pounds for any axle of the assembly, if there is no other axle within 9 feet of any axle of the assembly.

(3) On a legal combination of vehicles, only 1 tandem axle assembly shall be permitted on the designated highways at the gross permissible weight of 16,000 pounds per axle, if there is no other axle within 9 feet of any axle of the assembly, and if no other tandem axle assembly in the combination of vehicles exceeds a gross weight of 13,000 pounds per axle. On a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer having not more than 5 axles, 2 consecutive tandem axle assemblies shall be permitted on the designated highways at a gross permissible weight of 16,000 pounds per axle, if there is no other axle within 9 feet of any axle of the assembly.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3), on a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer having not more than 5 axles, 2 consecutive sets of tandem axles may carry a gross permissible weight of not to exceed 17,000 pounds on any axle of the tandem axles if there is no other axle within 9 feet of any axle of the tandem axles and if the first and last axles of the consecutive sets of tandem axles are not less than 36 feet apart and the gross vehicle weight does not exceed 80,000 pounds to pick up and deliver agricultural commodities between the national truck network or special designated highways and any other highway. This subsection is not subject to the maximum axle loads of subsections (1), (2), and (3). For purposes of this subsection, a "tandem axle" means 2 axles spaced more than 40 inches but not more than 96 inches apart or 2 axles spaced more than 3-1/2 feet but less than 9 feet apart. This subsection does not apply during that period when reduced maximum loads are in effect pursuant to subsection (8).

(5) The exception to the loading maximums and gross vehicle weight requirements of subsection (12) under subsection (8) for a person hauling agricultural commodities applies only if the person who picks up or delivers the agricultural commodity either from a farm or to a farm notifies the county road commission for roads under its authority not less than 48 hours before the pickup or delivery of the time and location of the pickup or delivery. The county road commission shall issue a permit to the person and charge a fee that does not exceed the administrative costs incurred. The permit shall contain all of the following:

(a) The designated route or routes of travel for the load.

(b) The date and time period requested by the person who picks up or delivers the agricultural commodities during which the load may be delivered or picked up.

(c) A maximum speed limit of travel, if necessary.

(d) Any other specific conditions agreed to between the parties.

(6) The exception to the loading maximums and gross vehicle weight requirements of subsection (12) under subsection (8) applies to public utility vehicles that are owned or operated by public utilities under the jurisdiction of the Michigan public service commission, or are subcontracted by public utilities under the jurisdiction of the Michigan public service commission to perform electrical emergency public utility work, only under the following circumstances:

(a) For emergency public utility work on restricted roads, as follows:

(i) If required by the county road commission, the public utility shall notify the county road commission, as soon as practical, of the location of the emergency public utility work and provide a statement that the vehicles that were used to perform the emergency utility work may have exceeded the loading maximums and gross vehicle weight requirements of subsection (12) under subsection (8). The notification may be made via facsimile or electronically.

(ii) The public utility vehicle travels to and from the site of the emergency public utility work while on a restricted road at a speed not greater than 35 miles per hour.

(b) For nonemergency public utility work on restricted roads, as follows:

(i) If the county road commission requires, the public utility shall apply to the county road commission annually for a seasonal truck permit for roads under its authority before seasonal weight restrictions are effective. The county road commission shall issue a seasonal truck permit for each vehicle or vehicle configuration the public utility anticipates will be utilized for nonemergency public utility work. The county road commission may charge a fee for a permit that does not exceed the administrative costs incurred for the permit. The seasonal truck permit shall contain all of the following:

(A) The seasonal period requested by the public utility during which the permit is valid.

(B) A unique identification number for the vehicle and any vehicle configuration to be covered on the seasonal truck permit requested by the public utility.

(C) A requirement that travel on restricted roads during weight restrictions will be minimized and only utilized when necessary to perform work using the public utility vehicle or vehicle configuration and that nonrestricted roads shall be used for travel when available and for routine travel.

(ii) If the county road commission requires notification, the county road commission shall provide a notification application for the public utility to use when requesting access to operate on restricted roads and the public utility shall provide notification to the county road commission, via facsimile or electronically, not later than 24 hours before the time of the intended travel. Notwithstanding this subsection or an agreement under this subsection, if the county road commission determines that the condition of a particular road under its jurisdiction makes it unusable, the county road commission may deny access to all or any part of that road. The denial shall be made and communicated via facsimile or electronically to the public utility within 24 hours after receiving notification that the public utility intends to perform nonemergency work that requires use of that road. Any notification that is not disapproved within 24 hours after the notice is received by the county road commission is considered approved. The notification application required under this subparagraph may include all of the following information:

(A) The address or location of the nonemergency work.

(B) The date or dates of the nonemergency work.

(C) The route to be taken to the nonemergency work site.

(D) The restricted road or roads intended to be traveled upon to the nonemergency work site or sites.

(7) The normal size of tires shall be the rated size as published by the manufacturers, and the maximum wheel load permissible for any wheel shall not exceed 700 pounds per inch of width of tire.

(8) Except as provided in this subsection and subsection (9), during the months of March, April, and May in each year, the maximum axle load allowable on concrete pavements or pavements with a concrete base is reduced by 25% from the maximum axle load as specified in this chapter, and the maximum axle loads allowable on all other types of roads during these months are reduced by 35% from the maximum axle loads as specified. The maximum wheel load shall not exceed 525 pounds per inch of tire width on concrete and concrete base or 450 pounds per inch of tire width on all other roads during the period the seasonal road restrictions are in effect. This subsection does not apply to vehicles transporting agricultural commodities or public utility vehicles on a highway, road, or street under the jurisdiction of a local road agency.

(9) The state transportation department for roads under its jurisdiction and a county road commission for roads under its jurisdiction may grant exemptions from seasonal weight restrictions for milk on specified routes when requested in writing. Approval or denial of a request for an exemption shall be given by written notice to the applicant within 30 days after the date of submission of the application. If a request is denied, the written notice shall state the reason for denial and alternate routes for which the permit may be issued. The applicant may appeal to the state transportation commission or the county road commission. These exemptions do not apply on county roads in counties that have negotiated agreements with milk haulers or haulers of other commodities during periods of seasonal load limits before April 14, 1993. This subsection does not limit the ability of these counties to continue to negotiate such agreements.

(10) The state transportation department, or a local authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction, may suspend the restrictions imposed by this section when and where conditions of the highways or the public health, safety, and welfare warrant suspension, and impose the restricted loading requirements of this section on designated highways at any other time that the conditions of the highway require.

(11) For the purpose of enforcing this act, the gross vehicle weight of a single vehicle and load or a combination of vehicles and loads, shall be determined by weighing individual axles or groups of axles, and the total weight on all the axles shall be the gross vehicle weight. In addition, the gross axle weight shall be determined by weighing individual axles or by weighing a group of axles and dividing the gross weight of the group of axles by the number of axles in the group. For purposes of subsection (12), the overall gross weight on a group of 2 or more axles shall be determined by weighing individual axles or several axles, and the total weight of all the axles in the group shall be the overall gross weight of the group.

(12) The loading maximum in this subsection applies to interstate highways, and the state transportation department, or a local authority with respect to highways under its jurisdiction, may designate a highway, or a section of a highway, for the operation of vehicles having a gross vehicle weight of not more than 80,000 pounds that are subject to the following load maximums:

(a) Twenty thousand pounds on any 1 axle, including all enforcement tolerances.

(b) A tandem axle weight of 34,000 pounds, including all enforcement tolerances.

(c) An overall gross weight on a group of 2 or more consecutive axles equaling:

$$W = 500 \frac{LN}{N-1} + 12N + 36 \frac{L}{N-1}$$

where W = overall gross weight on a group of 2 or more consecutive axles to the nearest 500 pounds, L = distance in feet between the extreme of a group of 2 or more consecutive axles, and N = number of axles in the group under consideration; except that 2 consecutive sets of tandem axles may carry a gross load of 34,000 pounds each if the first and last axles of the consecutive sets of tandem axles are not less than 36 feet apart. The gross vehicle weight shall not exceed 80,000 pounds including all enforcement tolerances. Except for 5 axle truck tractor, semitrailer combinations having 2 consecutive sets of tandem axles, vehicles having a gross weight in excess of 80,000 pounds or in excess of the vehicle gross weight determined by application of the formula in this subsection are subject to the maximum axle loads of subsections (1), (2), and (3). As used in this subsection, "tandem axle weight" means the total weight transmitted to the road by 2 or more consecutive axles, the centers of which may be included between parallel transverse vertical planes spaced more than 40 inches but not more than 96 inches apart, extending across the full width of the vehicle. Except as otherwise provided in this section, vehicles transporting agricultural commodities shall have weight load maximums as set forth in this subsection.

(13) As used in this section:

(a) "Agricultural commodities" means those plants and animals useful to human beings produced by agriculture and includes, but is not limited to, forages and sod crops, grains and feed crops, field crops, dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, cervidae, livestock, including breeding and grazing, equine, fish, and other aquacultural products, bees and bee products, berries, herbs, fruits, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, nursery stock, mushrooms, fertilizer, livestock bedding, farming equipment, and fuel for agricultural use. The term does not include trees or lumber.

(b) "Emergency public utility work" means work performed to restore public utility service or to eliminate a danger to the public due to a natural disaster, an act of God, or an emergency situation, whether or not a public official has declared an emergency.

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